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NEWS RELEASE

Be cautious in strong winds

Firefighters encourage public to practice safety during high winds

El Paso, Texas – The El Paso Fire Department would like to remind the public to exercise caution at home, at work and on the road when high winds hit the area. Strong winds can compound fires, therefore residents should be vigilant of fire hazards and be especially careful when using fire and equipment that can generate heat and/or sparks. This includes vehicles, barbecues and power tools. Those living near flammable vegetation should also remain vigilant to the possibility of fires.

Immediately report smoke and/or flames to 9-1-1. Remember, in less than 30 seconds, a small flame can get completely out of control and begin filling a home with thick, black, poisonous smoke. In just a few minutes, a home can become completely engulfed with flames.

High winds can also cause downed power lines. Always assume them to be energized and potentially lethal. Remember the downed wires can electrically charge puddles of water, chain link fences or other conductive sources, so be extremely careful and report them to 9-1-1 immediately.

During high winds, the El Paso Fire Department also strongly discourages the use of candles, lighters, fire pits and fuel-powered lanterns. If you experience a loss of electrical power, do not use devices designed for outdoor use to light, heat or cook inside your home. These pose a fire and carbon monoxide poisoning risk.

Also take a moment to secure household items like outdoor furniture and trash bins that can cause bodily harm or property damage if catapulted by a wind gust. Remove any flammable items from the outside of your home.

Avoid being outside as much as possible. But if you must venture outside, look out for toppling trees and wind-blown debris. Wear sturdy glasses to protect your eyes.

If you are driving during high winds, be aware of high-profile vehicles that can be buffeted by turbulent winds. Slow down and anticipate flying debris coming across the road.

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